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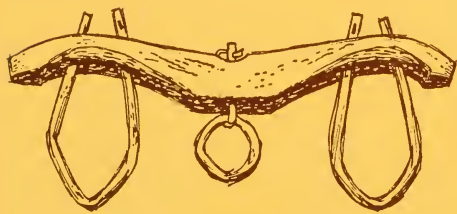
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Jacob, Edward J.

A Dlocked out incident in the
life of Abraham Lincoln

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A
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Incident
In
The
Life
Of
Abraham Lincoln

His
First
Speech



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**Designed and Published
by
Edward J. Jacob
Peoria, Illinois, U.S.A.**

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■ His
■ First
■ Speech

Text Matter

by

Edward J. Jacob

Illustrations

by

Charles R. Withee



October

Nineteen Thirty Five

The little prairie town of New Salem in central Illinois was first visited by Abraham Lincoln in April 1831, the occasion being a flat boat trip down the Sangamon river on its way to New Orleans. The boat out-



fitted by Denton Offutt at Sangamon Town, was stranded with it's cargo of produce at Rutledge's Mill dam on the Sangamon river and attracted the attention of the entire population of New Salem. Among those who crowded to the river bank was Ann Rutledge daughter of the mill owner --- here she caught her first glimpse of the tall, rawboned boat hand Abraham Lincoln. The release of the boat through the ingenuity of Lincoln dramatized forever his first appearance in New Salem.

It was in August of the same year that Lincoln returned to the little town, having completed his trip to the south with the Offutt boat. There on his arrival August first, 1831, he cast his first vote and served as election clerk.

Shortly afterwards Offutt arrived with a stock of general merchandise and opened a small



country store in which Lincoln served as a clerk. This business venture, however,

did not prove a success and was abandoned early in 1832.

On March 9, 1832 Lincoln now aged 23, announced himself as a candidate for the State legislature from the Sangamon county district of which New Salem was a part.

The Black Hawk war found Lincoln as an enlisted soldier from April to July 16, 1832. At the close of the war he was mustered out at Whitewater, Wisconsin. There he borrowed

a horse to take him back to New Salem but during the night preceding his departure the beast was stolen and he was forced to make the return trip afoot. His journey took him from Whitewater to Dixon, Illinois and thence to Peoria. While on the



road Lincoln met John G. Stewart and in Peoria the two of them purchased a canoe

which they paddled down the Illinois as far as the little river town of Havana, some forty miles south. Here they disposed of the craft and parted ways, Lincoln walking overland to New Salem and Stewart on to Springfield.



After Lincoln's return to New Salem little time remained for electioneering as election day was August 6, 1832. Since there was insufficient time for making a canvass of all of Sangamon county he devoted most of his efforts to the New Salem precinct where he addressed voters wherever a crowd gathered.

The Auctioneers Poog and Knap were conducting a sale of farm implements at Papps-ville and it was there that Lincoln delivered his first stump speech.

A. D. Ellis in a letter to William Herndon says:

“The speach hee made was at Paps Vill, thar was a large gathering thar on account a sale of goods. Hee was the only candidate thar and was call on to make a speach”



Lincoln said:

“Fellow citizens I presume you all know who I am. I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have

been solicited by many friends to become a candidate for the legis-



lature. My politics are short and sweet like the old womans dance. I am in favor of a National Bank. I am in favor of the Internal Improvement System and a High Protective Tariff. These are my sentiments and political principles. If elected I shall be thankful; if not it will be all the same".



In the early years of Lincoln's life he must have stood mentally head and shoulders above any of his contemporaries, and the voters who knew him and understood his philosophy of life would no doubt have agreed with the

writer (whose identity I do not know) who over one hundred years later while standing at the foot of the colossal statue of Lincoln in the great memorial hall in Washington D. C. wrote:

“When I stood before it I kept thinking that if he were to stand up, his immense head would break through the marble roof and like a mighty god look down upon the crowd thronging at his feet.”



Lincoln met defeat in the election but in the New Salem precinct where he was really known he received 205 votes of the 208 cast. In view of the fact that there were six other candidates on the ticket for the office of legislator, the high proportion of Lincoln votes cast in New Salem on August 6, 1832 speak elo-

quently of the fine esteem in which he was held by his fellow townsmen. Times might be written of this but little more need be said.

We of the present day might well pause for a moment in this chaos of political and social readjustments to reconstruct in our own minds this blocked out incident in the life of Abraham Lincoln.

On March 9, 1832 a young man just turned 23 years of age, living in a strange community, poorly clad, homeless and jobless



announced his candidacy to the State legislature. He was as Herndon says, in referring to Lincoln at this stage of his life “ = = = as a piece of floating drift-

wood". And yet in spite of all this, so great was the man's magnetism, his contagious sincerity, his unmistakable integrity that it was perhaps not strange that his newly acquired friends solicited him to become a candidate. Testimony to the high regard in which his friends held him is born by Mentor Graham when he says, "That not only was he called 'Honest Abe' but that all loved him because he was one of the most companionable persons you will ever see in this world".

And so we find recorded the results of the election in the New Salem precinct on August 6, 1832:

Total Votes Cast = = = = = 208
Votes for Abraham Lincoln 205

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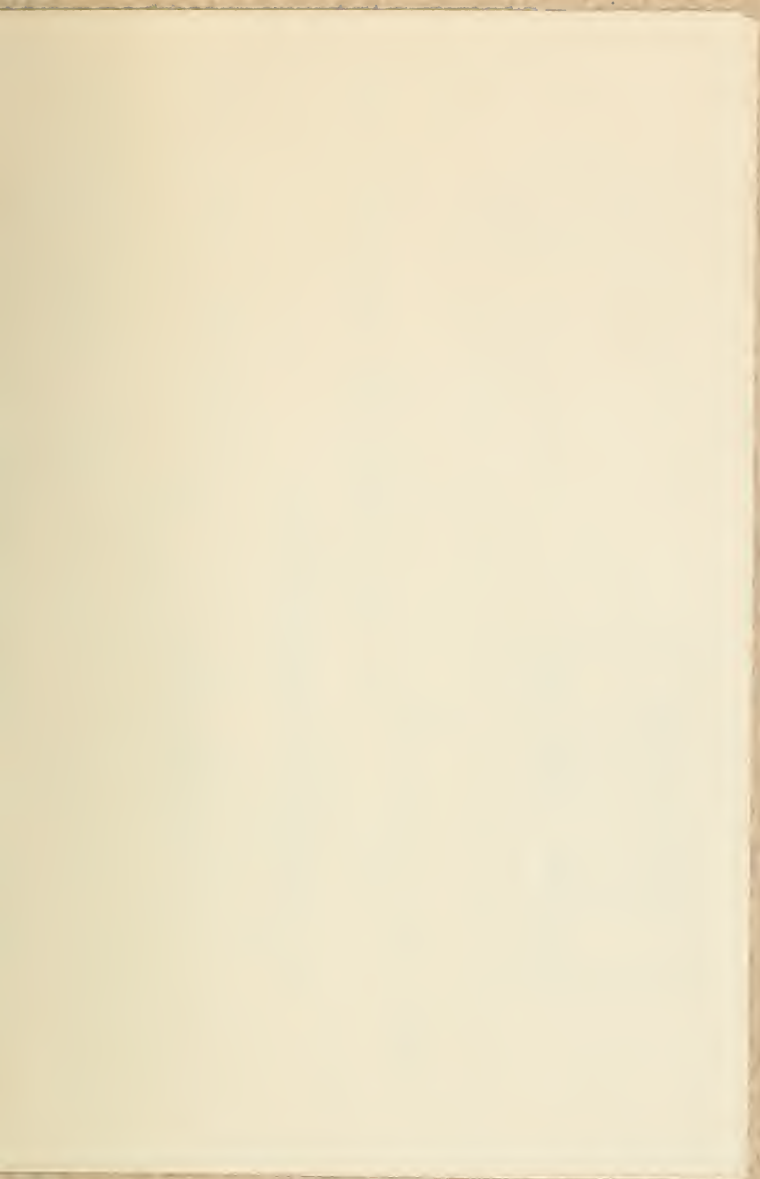
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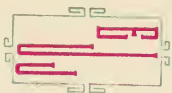




opinion of the Text and Format of this little Book.

Respectfully —

Edmund J. Farrell



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